

## **DNR PRESENTS PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY AWARDS**

The DNR Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology presented this year's preservation and archaeology awards at the O'Brien Conference on Historic Preservation/ Indiana Main Street annual meeting in Wabash, Indiana.

The Indiana Historic Preservation Awards are presented to recognize and congratulate the efforts of individuals, organizations and agencies that educate, preserve and advocate on behalf of cultural resources throughout Indiana.

This year's awards went to:

### **Elkhart County Parks and Recreation Department, The Bonneyville Mill**

The Indiana Historic Preservation Award for Outstanding Rehabilitation will be presented to the Elkhart County Parks and Recreation Department for the rehabilitation of the Bonneyville Mill Penstock and Turbines. Edward and Maria Bonney settled in Elkhart County in 1835 and built a sawmill and gristmill on the Little Elkhart River. The mill operated until 1966. It was donated to the Elkhart department in 1969.



After a 1974 restoration project returned the mill to operating condition, it opened for public tours and once again produced flour and meal. In 1976, it was the first building in the county to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It became a popular destination for school field trips and has welcomed over 750,000 visitors since it reopened.

### **Cemetery Preservationist John Walters**

The Indiana Historic Preservation Award for Outstanding Preservation of Indiana's Cemetery and Graveyard Heritage will be presented to John "Walt" Walters for his dedication to the preservation of Indiana's cemeteries. Walters has worked the last 10 years to protect and restore Indiana's cemeteries and graveyards. He started working for the Fayette County Highway Department mowing grass, including some of the county cemeteries. He felt that these "outdoor museums," as he calls them, deserved more care than just mowing. He convinced the county commissioners that he should learn to repair the stones. When a county cemetery commission was established (one of only 18 in the state), it hired Walters full time to begin restoring Fayette County's cemeteries.



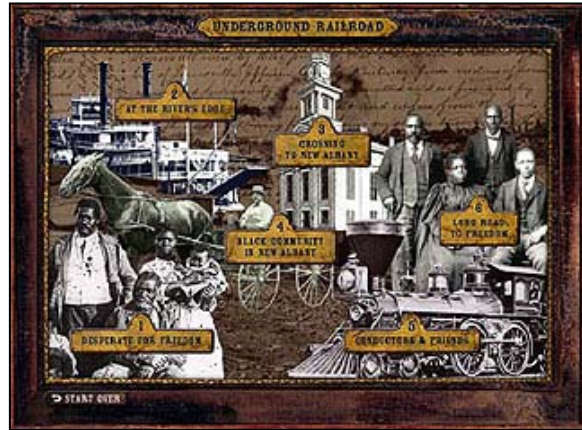
That started a decade-long passion for Walters to help preserve cemeteries around the state. After years of experience in Fayette County, Walters opened his own cemetery restoration firm. However, there are 20,000 cemeteries in the state, so he also began teaching others the skills and techniques to preserve cemeteries. He has partnered with the DNR Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology and the Indiana Historical Society to teach the annual cemetery

preservation workshop, which is aimed at spreading the knowledge of good preservation, cemetery laws and basic skills.

### **Carnegie Center for Art and History, New Albany**

The Indiana Historic Preservation Award for Outstanding Interpretation of the Underground Railroad in Floyd County will be presented to New Albany's Carnegie Center for Art and History.

In March 2006, the Carnegie Center for Art and History in New Albany opened a new permanent exhibit, Ordinary People, Extraordinary Courage: Men and Women of the Underground Railroad in the Indiana and Kentucky Borderland. This exhibit examines the nature of the antislavery community in Floyd County and places it in a regional and national context. Text and graphic panels introduce the Underground Railroad through original documents relating to actual people whose stories and perspectives visitors follow throughout the exhibit. Ordinary People, Extraordinary Courage combines traditional museum exhibit displays with a multimedia, interactive DVD, which visitors will view within the exhibit. This exhibit is so effective because it draws the viewer in and helps visitors understand this important part of Hoosier history.



### **Gas City School Apartments**

The Indiana Historic Preservation Award for Outstanding Tax Credit Project will be presented to the Gas City Historical Society and Englewood Development Corporation for the adaptive re-use of Gas City's East Ward School. The school was previously owned by the Mississinewa School Board, which had allocated funding to demolish the school. The Gas City Historical Society and Englewood Development Company purchased the school in order to convert it to affordable senior housing. The original building dates back to 1894, with a gymnasium addition built in 1923. Over \$2.3 million was invested in the rehabilitation of the school to create 19 units of elderly housing. A Historic Preservation Fund grant project, awarded by the DHPA, also assisted with the rehabilitation of the windows and masonry on both the school and gymnasium.



Gas City's East Ward school demonstrates the grassroots efforts of the local historical society and its partnership with a development corporation to literally save the school from the wrecking ball, rehabilitate it and preserve its usefulness to the community by providing much needed affordable housing for senior citizens.